Paper #4: Honesty, Self Efficacy and Universality

**Self Efficacy** is the extent or strength of one’s belief in their ability to complete tasks and reach goals.

**Honesty** constitutes holding truthfulness and previous promises above other facets of life.

**Universality** refers to relevance or applicability to all humans (for our intents and purposes).

Throughout this year, we have read many short stories, a few plays, and a couple of novels. Among these are *Wolf in White Van, As I Lay Dying, The Passing of Grandison, The Man who Lived Underground, Antigone, Oedipus the King,* and *Oedipus at Colonus.* Each of these stories may come from a different time period, but they have certain qualities in common. Each of these stories contains characters that must combat or align their own self-efficacy with their honesty.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Pick one protagonist from the list below, or another primary character of your choosing, and input the character into the plot of one of the other stories we have read. Discuss how the character would perform in his/her new environment. Specifically discuss how the character’s honesty and sense of self-efficacy would affect the character’s new environment. You may find that when you input a character into the plot of another story, many of their experiences are relatable, and that there is a bit of universality between the experiences of characters. This is not to say that all characters will respond similarly in relatable circumstances, merely that the circumstances themselves are relatable. Expand on the Universality of a character’s decisions in your conclusion. Also, you must use relevant quotations from the stories we have studied to prove your point. Cite your quotations in MLA format, and include a Works Cited page. **The paper should be at least three pages in length and over 1000 words. The paper should be in MLA format. Students will receive 20 points for a COMPLETE rough draft, which contains an introduction, supporting body paragraphs, and a conclusion. The Final Draft will be worth 50 points (5 of which come from peer review). See attached rubric for final draft grading scale.**

*Wolf in White Van’s* Sean Phillips went on creating his game even after it had killed a young girl named Carrie. Though he never intended this outcome, he refused to accept blame for it. He remained brutally honest, allowed all evidence to be shown to in court, but refused to alter his own path because of a misfortunate decision made by another person. His own experiences with death certainly affected this decision. Sean’s interactions with those around him are affected by the pity others feel for him, and his obvious facial wounds deter real connections. He creates a fantasy world where he feels more comfortable, and has more control.

*As I Lay Dying’s* Anse Bundren and the rest of the Bundren family had a pretty rough existence. His wife, Addie, was not faithful to him, yet this does not affect his decision to bury his wife where she wished to be buried despite the increasing hardships that this mission involves. Anse places his own honesty above all other values in this story and severely damages his family in the process. Perhaps more damage is done in achieving this honor than could possibly be redeemed by the honor.

*The Passing of Grandison* tells the story of Grandison, who is very loyal to his slave owner and he is proud to be treated so graciously by his owner. Throughout this story’s zany circumstances, Grandison repeatedly displays his loyalty. Nevertheless, he unexpectedly betrays his owner and runs away with his family. He believes in himself and what he has to do for his family above all else, but he does not reveal this to anyone. This comic depiction of slavery appears heartless, but eventually a hidden depth is revealed. Grandison approaches the white characters in this story with falseness that even the reader does not expect.

The trilogy of Oedipus displays a man who lives a tragic life, though the consequences of his actions are never actually his fault. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus finally receives the redemption that he deserves. Oedipus is a slave to fate, and is never in control of his life, but he suffers, and in a way, is eventually rewarded for his suffering. Oedipus certainly displays self-efficacy, but this is never enough to save him. He is honest to his own intentions, yet he is betrayed by his own ambition. Oedipus does not exemplify the false exterior and “twoness” that other characters like Grandison, Sean, and DuBois.

In *The Man who Lived Underground,* Fred Daniels is forced to confess to a murder he didn’t commit. He is dishonest though it is beyond his control. Things get a little trippy after this. He lives in an underground tunnel and rarely communicates with the outside world. He feels powerless, and he does not know how to overcome the racism and other horrors of the real world. While underground, he observes the world from afar and it slowly becomes something unrecognizable and unapproachable. He deals with the dishonesty done to him by creating a world where he lives off of others, unbeknownst to them. He steals to survive, and he no longer has sympathy for the world that he can no longer understand. He may retain a warped sense of self-efficacy, but he is unable to better his living situation regardless of his attempts. In going underground, and becoming separate from society, Daniels actually rids himself of the false exterior that many people in society carry. These social practices no longer make sense to him.

**EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH:**

Oedipus was tortured by fate repeatedly, which was outside of his knowing or control. He was powerless in creating his own future. Sean Phillips also felt powerless towards the repercussions of his former decisions. He felt that the young form of his self which was responsible for disfiguring himself was no longer a part of him. If Oedipus was to take the place of Sean Phillips, Oedipus probably would have not forgiven himself as easily. In *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus did everything he could to prevent himself from killing his father and sleeping with his mother, yet when these actions were committed, he could not live with himself. He even viewed himself as a liar for stating to Creon that he will not kill his father. Oedipus states, “In what is past I have been proved toward him an utter liar” (Sophocles 181). This shows that Oedipus is a rash and tense person, who would constantly feel responsible for his previous actions, no matter the circumstance. Sean doesn’t feel this way. He feels that past decisions were made by a less informed version of the self. The results of these decisions may be unfortunate, but they are not alterable. Both of these characters approach regret, a universal human emotion, in an entirely different fashion. One might say that Sean’s approach is more functional, because it allows him to continue with his life. Oedipus, on the other hand, initially reacts by gouging out his eyes, which is not productive in helping him adapt to his future.

**Due Dates:** The rough draft of the paper will be due on Class 17. There will also be a peer review session during Class 17, and this will be worth five points of your final grade. Time will be allocated for working on writing during class in classes 16, 17, and 18. The final draft of your paper will be due in Class 19.

**Workshops:** In class work time which is allocated for this essay will be used to work on your paper privately and also consult me for feedback. Computers will be at your disposal in the classroom or we will go to the computer lab. MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A WAY OF RETREIVING THE ESSAY YOU ARE WORKING ON IN THE CLASSROOM.

**Peer Review:** The peer review of your essays will be intended to be used as a means of helping your classmates perform better and also as a means of viewing what routes others are choosing to take in their essay construction. In reviewing your peer’s paper, you will identify any errors which appear to you and also supply any supporting ideas that come to mind. If you don’t like the corrections or ideas supplied by a peer on your paper, don’t use them.